

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 22 REMAINS FAITHFUL TO CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES

Ms. SEKULA GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. SEKULA GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, Congressional District 22 in Texas remains faithful to conservative principles.

I am Dr. SHELLEY SEKULA GIBBS, and I am the newly elected Member of Congress from Congressional District 22. The people in my district are hard-working individuals who believe in conservative principles, such as the sanctity of life; traditional marriage between one man and one woman; the right to bear arms; smaller, more efficient government; making tax cuts permanent; winning the war on terror; and opposing a cut-and-run strategy; and stopping illegal immigration while streamlining legal immigration.

The families in Congressional District 22 of Texas want better transportation options, a solid energy policy with energy independence, affordable health insurance, and lower health care costs through the free market. They want affordable, quality education for their children from pre-K to college that is under local control, and strong homeland security to prevent terrorist attacks on our home soil.

One of my district's primary ways in which to prevent a terrorist attack is to be a hard target. The Houston area has all major assets that are attractive to terrorists to attack, as identified by the FBI, including petrochemical facilities that produce 50 percent of the petrochemicals in our Nation and 25 percent of our country's gasoline. The Port of Houston is close to our area and in the city. It is close to our district and in the city, and it is the largest foreign tonnage port in the Nation.

We have NASA's Johnson Space Center there, which is the home of manned space flight. We rely on the 147th Texas Air National Guard with its squadrons of F-16s at Ellington Field to maintain our air defense and make us a hard target. Passing a military appropriations bill today helps us secure our defense, but the fate of the 147th Texas Air National Guard remains uncertain but of critical importance to the people in my district.

Terrorists must not be given an opportunity to bring our great country down, and we must maintain our vigilance. In the BRAC process, some communities were awarded more military infrastructure while others were reduced. Some have turned down those military assets. Florida recently was unwilling to accept naval facilities from Virginia Beach, Virginia. But we in Houston, we hope that our F-16s will be replaced by newer, more technologically advanced jets, and that our squadron will not be relocated. We are

eager to maintain the Texas Air National Guard and look for support on this issue.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the people in my district want our country to be faithful to the principles that you and the leadership of the Republican party have promoted through your years as the Speaker of the House of this auspicious body.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your guidance, your patience and your rock-solid commitment to conservative values on behalf of our great country. And I want to thank you and my colleagues for an appointment to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and to the Workforce and Education Committee. I commit to working very hard and rolling up my sleeves for our great district and our great country.

May God continue to bless the United States of America, and our men and women in uniform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1230

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH WEBB, JR., DEPUTY SURGEON GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with a heavy heart to honor a great man, particularly because this comes on the eve of his retirement from the United States Army. I have had the privilege of working with this distinguished gentleman in the service of our country for the last 14 years. His name is Major General Joe Webb, Jr. He has distinguished himself by his exceptional service to the United States of America while in positions of increasing responsibility within the Army Medical Department, a career that was launched in June of 1961 when he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

From January 1 of 1996 through 31 December of 2006, he served in successive positions of increasing responsibility as the Senior Dental Corps Staff Officer, with the Office of the Surgeon General; Commander of the United States Army Dental Command; the Assistant Surgeon General for Force Sustainment; Commanding General of Tripler Army Medical Center and DOD Lead Agent for TRICARE in the Pacific region; and culminating his illustrious career in the position of United States Army Deputy Surgeon General.

Major General Webb was an officer and leader who approached each of his

assignments with great tenacity. In a career spanning more than 35 years, this soldier, clinician and commander displayed throughout his distinguished military service the highest levels of leadership, professional competence, integrity and moral courage.

Much is spoken and written about Major General Joe Webb. The consensus and the prose consistently agree that this man is the genuine article. Because of my extensive contact with general officers, I know what attributes are necessary for success at the strategic level. You see, I work with generals that do generals' work, I also have worked with generals that do colonels' work. The most refreshing encounters that I have experienced are with colonels that do generals' work. This was the epitome of Joe Webb.

In 1996, the Dental Corps was confronted with significant recruiting and retention compromises that would have had a detrimental impact on the dental health of soldiers, sailors and airmen if it was not remedied.

I served on the Personnel Committee of the House Armed Services and later chaired that committee, with responsibility for the oversight of the military health delivery system.

My brother, John, is now a Colonel and dentist in the Army Medical Corps; at the time, I went to my brother to say, John, what is the problem? We are not able to retain these dentists. There are so many open slots. We are having an exodus. At the time President Clinton was doing a drawdown. I know a lot of the warriors are leaving the service, but we have to stop the leak.

My brother explained the situation to me and the order of the consequences. He proposed a strategy for success, but more importantly, my brother identified the major players, even mapped out a strategy of success on the back of a napkin and said, I must put you with Joe Webb. Joe Webb was a Colonel at the time, and was a key element of ensuring a successful remedy to this looming problem.

The following day Congressman NORWOOD, Joe Webb, my brother, John, and I initiated a dialogue that focused on a strategy for implementation. The impact of the continuation pay package reached all three services and preserved the human capital necessary to deliver world-class dentistry. This is a living legacy that continues to have far-reaching implications. Many call it propay, but those who receive that check know exactly what it means.

I called upon the combined and extensive expertise of Joe Webb and my brother, John Buyer, as critical resources to make the legislation a reality from its introduction, through conference, and into law. Without their dedicated focus on this issue, it is likely that the continuation pay bill would never have met with the success it had. The Air Force, the Navy and Marine Corps programs rested their future upon the shoulders of then Colonel Joe Webb. But this was common through this man's career.